

TAB C

DISCUSSION OF THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF TEMPORARY PROMOTIONS TO
SUPERGRADE POSITIONS

1. Examination of other systems of temporary promotions in the Government to determine their experience can be of some help. In a sense the military and Foreign Service systems were designed to meet emergency conditions when the entire establishment was faced with rapid expansion. In such circumstances with the fixed number of permanent grades some relief was necessary in order to place properly rated or ranked individuals in positions the rating of which was higher than the permanent allocation of grades would permit. The Civil Service system as such is geared to an entirely different concept and up to this time there appears to be no requirement for statutory recognition of a temporary promotion system. Within the Civil Service the Veterans Preference Act has further discouraged any program of temporary promotion.

2. One of the apparent advantages of temporary promotions would be to give flexibility. Such flexibility can be envisaged as being desirable in temporary situations where the incumbent will be absent for an extended period. Another type of situation would appear to be that involving assignment of a Senior Representative abroad. It can be argued that there may be many situations where the supergrade rating for the position is based on a requirement for unique and specialized qualifications. Upon filling such a job and in line with eventual rotation it could well be that such special talents were not necessary in any other job. However, through study of the inventory of supergrade positions within CIA, it is believed that the feasibility of promoting incumbents of supergrade positions to temporary positions would not generally depend upon unique or specialized knowledge and experience. The list of supergrade positions indicates that more generally the supergrade ratings are based on executive responsibility together with a technical knowledge of the field concerned. It is believed, therefore, that any advantage to

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temporary promotions would depend on the degree of responsibility attaching to the specific position. As an example, if it were proposed that a GS-18 Assistant Director were to go to a university for graduate study of 15 months duration, it would seem both desirable and feasible that his Deputy, a GS-17, be placed in the job for such period with the temporary grade of GS-18. A clear understanding would be reached that the permanent occupant of the position would return to it and the temporary occupant would revert to his former position and grade. A temporary promotion of this type should have a prior determination that the individual is fully qualified in all respects to discharge the responsibilities of the higher rated position. If that determination is not favorable he should not be granted the temporary promotion even though through necessity he would actually be placed in the position. This is based on the principle that a promotion should, with no reservations, recognize that the man is qualified to fulfill the duties of the job. In those situations where temporary promotions seem appropriate it is believed that the length of contemplated service in the higher position should be at least one year. There are many situations within CIA where individuals are placed on an "Acting" basis and temporary promotions should not be involved unless the period is of substantial length, such as one year. Otherwise the administrative problems would outweigh the advantages.

a. Also pertinent at this point is the fact that it is now CIA policy to establish Senior Representative positions in the supergrades on a sliding scale basis from GS-15 through 18. With this concept there is no necessity to attempt greater flexibility.

b. In view of the existing ceiling on occupants of supergrade positions flexibility must be achieved within that ceiling. In order to achieve a career

service concept some consideration must be given to the establishment of a procedure for promotions which would consider all eligible members of the service and not base considerations for promotion on fortuitous circumstances which find an individual placed in a particular spot.

c. One possible advantage to a program of temporary promotions would be that whenever a man is placed in a position which is higher than his rating the use of a temporary promotion would immediately make available to him the compensation at the higher rate, pending the time it was deemed appropriate to make the promotion permanent. It is believed that this possible advantage is more than outweighed by its disadvantages. In the civilian ranks of Government service there are no true temporary promotion systems. Therefore, the majority of people have come to expect that when they are promoted it is recognition of satisfactory performance in the past and belief that the individual can perform the duties at the higher grade. In such circumstances it is believed that the recognition accorded the individual both by way of reward for past services and increased stature is the primary satisfaction in a promotion and that the increased compensation is secondary.

3. In any particular case involving a temporary promotion as well as in any program of temporary promotions there are inherent disadvantages.

a. Experience clearly shows that even though a promotion may be considered temporary at the time, the longer the individual stays at that grade the more difficult it becomes as a practical matter to return him to the previous lower grade. Various types of natural pressures develop to retain the individual at the higher rating. Thus a promotion of this type, particularly where it is of indefinite duration, tends to become, de facto, a permanent promotion.

b. There is also the danger that management and supervisors, where temporary promotions are permitted, will utilize them for probationary purposes. During such period it is the hope that it can be determined that the man is qualified. However,

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in this type of situation again it has been found extremely difficult to demote the individual on the ground that he has not measured up. If the demotion does occur, there are serious adverse effects on the individual as well as his effectiveness in dealing with others. On the other hand if he is left in the higher grade the function of the organization is hurt if he is not performing up to par. However, experience again has shown that the tendency in such cases is simply to leave the man in the higher rating and hope that time will solve the problem. Therefore, this Agency under any circumstances should not utilize temporary promotions as a probationary device and should satisfy itself in all particular prior to promotion, whether permanent or temporary, that the individual is qualified to fulfill in all respects the responsibility of the higher grade. The proper probationary period is before, if possible, and after assumption of duties in the new position, but prior to promotion action.

c. In most tables relating to assimilated ranks, GS-15's are equivalent to Colonels and the supergrades are equivalent to "flag" ranks. Within the military service there is an intangible but recognizable "hump" over which one must go to reach "flag" rank. This is based in part on the numerical limits of "flag" ranks plus Congressional confirmation of all appointees. It is recognized that there are many outstanding men in the service who for one reason or another do not advance and get over the "hump".

(1) It is believed that over the years there is something to be gained by establishing a similar pattern within the CIA Career Service utilizing the normal GS schedule and the supergrades. It is believed undesirable to have a large number of temporary promotions to supergrades and subsequent demotions to the GS-15 level.

(2) This problem could be related to the present effort to establish an Executive Inventory within CIA. While that inventory at the present time is

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not based on supergrade categories, it is believed that the Executive Inventory and the "flag" rank situations are somewhat similar in that they represent top management of the departments concerned. It is suggested that these programs could be blended so that advancement into the supergrade category or Executive Inventory would be meaningful as bringing an individual into the fraternity of the top management. Obviously a great deal of shifting in and out of this group would be undesirable.